

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheets cancel Fig. 50 and renumber Figs. 51-64 as Figs. 50-63, respectively.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Claims 1-28 are pending in this application, claims 12-14 being withdrawn. By this Amendment, claims 1-28 are amended. Claims 1, 2 and 15 are amended as suggested by the Examiners during the personal interview. Claims 1-28 are amended for form. No new matter is added.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representatives by Examiners Wilhelm and Dickson at the interview held June 25, 2008, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below, which constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 11, 21-23 and 27 contain allowable subject matter. However, for at least the reasons discussed below, Applicants respectfully assert that all of the claims are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-10 and 16-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Hass (U.S. Patent No. 3,768,830); claims 1-6, 16 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Cumming et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,290,627); and claims 1 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Saslecov (U.S. Patent No. 6,092,836). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

As agreed during the personal interview, the amendments to claims 1 and 15 overcome the above rejections. Claims 2-10, 16-20 and 28 depend from independent claim 1. Therefore, claims 2-10, 16-20 and 28 are also patentable over Hass, Cumming and Saslecov for at least their dependency on independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

Claims 24-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Cumming et al. in view of Budden et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,354,620). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Budden does not remedy the above-described deficiencies of Cumming. Budden is applied by the Office Action only for its alleged teaching of sealing textile fabrics with a

silicone coat (see Office Action, page 4). Further, claims 24-26 depend from independent claim 1. Therefore, claims 24-26 are patentable for at least their dependency on independent claim 1, as well as for the additional features they recite. Applicants thus respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that withdrawn claims 12-14 depend from independent claim 1 and should thus be rejoined and allowed upon the allowance of independent claim 1 (see MPEP §821.04). Further, because this application is a National Stage PCT application, it is improper to restrict dependent claims (see MPEP §1850). Applicants thus request rejoinder and allowance of claims 12-14 upon the allowance of independent claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Patrick T. Muffo
Registration No. 60,342

JAO:PTM/lrh

Date: July 14, 2008

Attachments:

Replacement Sheets for Figs. 50-63
Petition for Extension of Time

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 320850
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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